

WorkFirst High Performance Bonus  
Innovative Project  
2002 Nomination

Local Planning Area: Spokane/Lincoln County

Name of Project: WorkFirst CJST Mental Health Services

Contact: Albert Garza, WorkSource Spokane, 509.532.3029

---

Mike Midkiff, DSHS, 509-227-2857

---

Dan Ruddell, Community Colleges/TECC, 509.533.4709

E-Mails: [angarza@esd.wa.gov](mailto:angarza@esd.wa.gov)  
[midkimj@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:midkimj@dshs.wa.gov)  
[druddell@iel.spokane.cc.wa.us](mailto:druddell@iel.spokane.cc.wa.us)

## 1. Describe your project

The Community Colleges of Spokane Customized Job Skills Training program utilizes a on site mental-health professional to assist our clients in solving personal issues thereby enabling our clients to successfully complete the training. Personal issues are the biggest obstacles in our clients' lives that stop their success. The services of a mental health counselor who comes to the training site and meets individually with clients in crisis has assisted clients in overcoming these issues and allowed them to be able to stay and successfully complete the training programs. Not only are more clients completing the program, those who complete have learned the process of resolving issues and are able to gain employment and subsequently get off TANF.

During July 1, 2001 and June 30, 2002, the Community Colleges of Spokane pre-employment training program enrolled 421 clients (97% TANF); graduated 360 clients (86%) and placed over 292 (81%) into meaningful employment. The high rate of completion is directly related to the services of an on-site mental health counselor working to help resolve issues with the clients.

## 2. What makes this project innovative

Mental health professionals are available in the community; however our clients are required to attend classes from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The services of a mental health professional on site allow the CJST staff to refer client's immediately to counseling when issues develop thereby resolving the conflict. This allows the mental health professional time to assist the client in developing skills to better handle issues in the future. This engagement helps keep the client engaged in the training program and ultimately on the job. The alternative would be to have the client call for an appointment, wait for an appointment at a future time, having the client leave the training facility. With the mental health professional on site, the client is only away from their class for a short time and appointments are quickly scheduled.

## 3. Partnerships

The on site mental-health professional brings community resources to the client along with the ability to refer clients' to these resource. CJST continues to support and strengthen the resources shared with our partners at DSHS and ESD.